

REGIONALIZATION OF PUBLIC SAFETY IN ORANGE COUNTY

Orange County, Florida has 14 separate governments. Each one of those governments considers public safety to be the major priority of government, yet crime has increased in central Florida 396% in the past five years. Public safety budgets have nearly doubled in the past ten years yet the public is not as safe as it was ten years ago. The reason for the fact that more money does not equal a safer public is because the resources are not being allocated efficiently.

Our study of public safety has concluded that approximately 35% of public safety funds are wasted by duplication of services and appropriated funds into the wrong places. We call on all governments in central Florida to form a committee to regionalize public safety in central Florida for the good of its citizens.

Many municipalities and some States have already concluded that they cannot afford or adequately serve its citizens with multiple and separate public safety agencies. The State of New Jersey enacted a law requiring government services to consolidate. Cherry Hill, New Jersey consolidated its fire rescue operations and was able to reduce the number of heavy trucks by 43%. Chief Giorgio explained that *“there is a base requirement that will meet the service needs of each community. Once that requirement is satisfied, any additional equipment and personnel are superfluous and an unnecessary expense.”*

To explain that concept to the public, I use the restaurant analogy. Imagine a restaurant with 14 tables, each operated by a separate government. There are 14 hostesses, 14 cashiers, 14 cooks, 14 busboys, 14 managers and 14 waitresses. If you consolidate the restaurant you can have one hostess, one cashier, one manager, two cooks and perhaps three waitresses. The same applies to every function of government. Orange County has ten 9-1-1 call centers. Orlando and Orange County both have individual SWAT teams, mounted horse patrols, marine patrols, and canine units. The duplication across all governments in the public safety area is an enormous waste of resources.

I have created a map of Orange County with four zones. If we regionalize public safety into these four zones we can reduce waste by 35% **and** increase public safety. The regionalization will result in lower costs for equipment, training, overhead and administration. Those resources can be shifted into more public safety personnel on the streets of our community protecting our citizens. Central Florida desperately needs more community public safety presence and less bureaucracy.

If we ignore the political and labor union obstacles to regionalization and focus on the results we can achieve this goal. The goal of a more efficient government, less waste, and a safer community. The citizens of central Florida hereby request our elected officials to protect us by implementing this regionalization plan.